

THE
HALIFAX SCHOOL QUESTION.

Shall the State Surrender to the Church?

DISCOURSE

BY REV. T. B. GREGORY, IN THE CHURCH OF
THE REDEEMER,

SUNDAY, JULY 23rd., 1893.

HALIFAX, N. S.,
JAMES BOWES & SONS, PRINTERS, 142 HOLLIS STREET.
1893.



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A few weeks ago the people of our city were treated to a most extraordinary communication from the leading dignitary of the Catholic Church in Nova Scotia. Had a similar document been sent forth by a Protestant clergyman the people would have called it a piece of unpardonable impudence. "Who is he," they would have said, "to be talking to us as though he was a little god?" The Archbishop's address suggested to us Shakespear's lines:

"Man, proud Man, dressed in a little brief authority,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep."

The Archbishop is out of place in this free land of the West. During the war between the States, a chaplain, meeting a rather suspicious looking character, asked him what army he belonged to; "Grant's," was the reply. "And what army do you belong to?" asked the soldier of the chaplain. "The army of the Lord," answered the chaplain. "Then," said the soldier, "You are a mighty long way from Headquarters." I feel just so about the Archbishop—that he's a mighty long way from headquarters. The headquarters for all such men as he is not in Halifax, but in Mexico, or Lima, or Madrid, or Rio Janeiro. We people with good old Saxon blood in our veins, and good old Saxon ideas and principles in our heads and hearts, cannot appreciate such utterances as the Archbishop's late address. It is either above us or below us. At any rate, we cannot under-

stand it. Perhaps if we lived in Mexico, or Peru, or Ireland, it would appear to us in another light.

But, taking the Archbishop's fulmination as it stands in cold type, let us study it, to see just what it means. I am not going to discuss the technical phases of the question. The splendid editorial in the *Morning Chronicle* did that part of it to perfection, so that, in that line, nothing more need be said. I wish at this time to take the question in its broader bearings. I wish to go down to the root of the matter. Think not that the real bone of contention was the building of the Russell Street schoolhouse. There is something back of that; and that something is this: Shall Halifax, shall Nova Scotia, shall the World, be ruled and governed by the civil or the ecclesiastical power?

You will remember that the Archbishop had much to say in his address about a certain something that he called the "*Episcopal Corporation*." Now, that Episcopal Corporation is nothing less than the *Roman Catholic Church*. The fight, then, is one between the Catholic Church and the civic authority of Halifax. By reading between the lines, one can see that in the Archbishop's opinion the church, and not the civil authorities, should rule. The Archbishop believes that he is the most authoritative personage in the province of Nova Scotia, and that to him belongs the right to dictate to the rest of us what we shall think, say and do. Allow me to prove to you that I am not speaking amiss. The Church—I am talking now from the Archbishop's point of view—the Church is an institution ordained and established of God. Its priests are the duly elected custodians of God's laws, the duly appointed spokesmen of God's will. God has revealed to them what his laws are, and what his will is, and has invested them with the authority to impose those laws and that will, on all men the world over. Such is the theory that every Catholic is required to accept. The Archbishop is a Catholic, a true one, we will suppose, and therefore *he* accepts it. Then, the

Archbishop believes that he, as the highest official of the Catholic Church in this province, is the one duly authorized by Almighty God to lay down the law for every other man, woman and child in the province. The Archbishop cannot deny this. The moment he denies it he ceases to be a good Catholic. For listen to what I am about to say. Said Cardinal Manning: "We declare it to be necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff." Said Bishop Gilmour, in 1873: "Nationalities must be subordinate to religion, and we must learn that we are Catholics first, and citizens next. God is above man, and the Church above the State." Pius IX. declared: "The pope and the priests ought to have dominion over the temporal affairs. The Romish Church and her ecclesiastics have a right to immunity from civil law. In case of conflict between ecclesiastical and civil power, the ecclesiastical power ought to prevail." From the Canon Law, existing in full force to-day, I take the following extracts: "All human power is from evil, and must therefore be under the pope. The pope has the right to annul state laws, treaties, constitutions, and to absolve from obedience thereto, so soon as they seem detrimental to the rights of the Church, or those of the clergy. The pope can release from every obligation, vow or oath, either before or after being made." During a sermon delivered in New York, January 1st, 1888, Vicar-General Preston said: "Every word Leo speaks from his high chair is the voice of the Holy Ghost, and must be obeyed. It is said that *politics* is not within the province of the Church, and that the Church has only jurisdiction in matters of faith. You say, 'I will receive my faith from the pontiff, but I will not receive my politics from him.' This assertion is unloyal. You must not think as you choose, you must think as Catholics. The man who says, 'I will take my *faith* from Peter, but I will not take my politics from Peter,' is not a true Catholic." In his Encyclical Letter of the year

1885, Leo said: "All Catholics must make themselves felt as active elements in daily *political life* in countries where they live. All Catholics should exert their power to cause the constitutions of States to be modelled on the principles of the Church."

No more is necessary. I have proven, by their own words, that the officials of the Roman Catholic Church believe it to be their *right*, and their *duty*, to *rule the State*, and to make the civil subordinate to the ecclesiastical power. Such is the spirit of that *Episcopal Corporation* in whose name the Archbishop stood up to bully and browbeat the civil power of our good city. He was simply consistent. As a true and loyal prelate of the Church he could not have spoken otherwise. If he was arrogant, be it remembered that Rome is always arrogant. If he spoke with a high and mighty authority, let it be borne in mind that the Church of which he is a priest claims, and has ever claimed, *all* authority. And there was a time, as you all know, when she not only claimed but possessed the authority. She was supreme. And what was the result? She spread out her Octopus arms until she had grasped about all the earth. She attacked human reason, and with fagot, thumbscrew, and rack, beat down all opposition to her imperial will. Grown fat and sensual upon the spoils wrung from the people, her priests committed every crime, and were, by laws of their own making, shielded from the just punishment of their iniquitous lives. Had the Reformation held back much longer the human race would have perished in its own rottenness. In the words of Castelar, the great Republican of Madrid, "If the human intellect had completely submitted to the Pope, Europe would have been to-day a stagnant empire, Asiatic in its character—an ecclesiastical tyranny, with its Grand Lama in the Eternal City."

Listen to that word again—ecclesiastical *tyranny*. Did you read the Archbishop's address to us? Did you read it carefully? Did you observe how absolute it was,

as though it was Jupiter, thundering from high Olympus, or Jehovah, proclaiming his word from the circle of the earth to us poor grasshoppers below !

" I am Sir Oracle ;
And when I ope my mouth
Let no dog bark."

Ah me ! it would be a bad day for us poor dogs if the Oracle had the power he desired ! If it was not for the strong arm of the civil law, which our Anglo-Saxon race has reared for the protection of human rights, there would be no living where the Church is, unless one would consent to live as she ordered. What do you suppose the Archbishop would do to the members of our School Board, and all such wretched heretics as myself, and to all others who did not kiss his hand, I say, what do you suppose he would do to us, provided he had the power ? I tell you what he would do. He would crush us, and sweep us away like so much vermin ! But is the Archbishop so bad a man ? you ask. I did not say that he was a bad man. I do not say it now. But this I do say, that the System to which he has sworn allegiance *is a bad System* ; and so far as the means will enable him, he must be true to that System, or be a bad Catholic. But let me show you the System, in the words of its own leaders. Remember, that what I am about to give you is not my own language, but that of Popes, Cardinals, Bishops, Priests and Editors, in full fellowship with the Church. I begin with the Syllabus of Pius IX of the year '64 : " The Church has the right to require the State *not* to leave every man free to profess his own religion." But suppose the State won't listen to such requirements ? Then, " the Church has the right to exercise her power without the permission of the State." But to exercise her power to what end ? Why, to the suppression of all free opinion. Pope Pius IX, in his Encyclical Letter of August, '54, said : " The *absurd and erroneous* doctrines in defence of liberty of conscience are a most pestilential error—a pest of all

others most to be dreaded in a state." The same pope, two years later, anathematized "those who assert the liberty of conscience and of religious worship," also "all such as maintain that the Church may not employ force." The Archbishop of St. Louis said: "Heresy and unbelief are *crimes*, and in Christian countries, as in Italy and Spain, where all the people are Catholics, and where the Catholic religion is an essential part of the law of the land, they are *punished* as other crimes." The following is from the *Rambler*, a Catholic paper of London: "The very name of liberty ought to be banished from the domain of religion. Shall I foster that damnable doctrine that Socinianism, and Calvinism, and Anglicanism, and Judaism are not every one of them mortal sins, like murder and adultery? Shall I hold out hopes to my erring Protestant brother, that I will not meddle with *his* creed, if he will not meddle with mine? Shall I tempt him to forget that he has no more right to his religious views than he has to my purse, to my house, or to my blood?" Says Bishop O'Connor: "Religious liberty is merely endured until the opposite can be carried into effect without fail to the Catholic world." The *Catholic Review* says: "Protestantism, of every form, has not, and never can have, any right where Catholicity is triumphant." But finally, listen to these two teachings taken verbatim from the Canon Law of the Church: "The execution of Papal commands for the persecution of heretics causes *remission of sins*." And again: "He who kills one that is excommunicated *is no murderer in a legal sense*." Well, such is the System; and the man who stands up by such System is sure to persecute whenever he can. If he does not persecute to-day, it is simply because he cannot, on account of the majesty of the civil law. That once fairly out of the way, he would cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war against all who would not fall into line.

Let me say here, that our only salvation is in standing firmly by the civil law. If the members of the

Halifax School Board are here to-night, I would implore them to stand firmly by the civil power. If you want your city to remain the home of freedom, you must not duck your head to the agent of an Italian priest who never saw your city, who cares for you only in so far as he may induce you to give him your ducats, and who loves you with so tender a love that, the means permitting, he would most speedily and effectually burn you at the stake! Between the "Episcopal Corporation," with its headquarters in Rome, and the good old Anglo-Saxon liberty of Halifax, I make my choice in a moment. I take liberty, now and forever! With the institution that tells me, to my teeth, that honest free thought is a crime, like theft, adultery or murder; that it ought to be punished like such crimes, and that, if it had the power, it *would* punish it; I say, with such institution I want nothing to do. I can sit down in the spirit of brotherly love by the side of any man or institution that is willing to observe with me the Golden Rule, and show a willingness to grant me the same charity that it asks for itself; but when an institution won't agree not to meddle with me, if I will agree not to meddle with it; when it comes after me like a wild beast, to tear me to pieces unless I will go its way and do its bidding, there is nothing for me to do, if I have any manhood, but to declare war against that institution, and fight it to the bitter end, let the result be what it may.

In coming now to the consideration of the School Question, proper, I lay down the following propositions, which I believe to be sound: *The children of the State should be educated by the STATE; and the education should be strictly SECULAR and NON-SECTARIAN.*

Let us take the non-sectarian idea first. The State is made up of many men of many minds, and the money of those many men of many minds goes, in the shape of taxation, into the common treasury, to be employed for a common purpose; and to take that money and devote it to partizan or sectarian ends is a *manifest breach of good*

faith. It is favoritism of the deepest dye; a bad enough thing in any case, but especially damnable on the part of the State. Let education be strictly non-partizan and non-sectarian, so that it will be impossible for any member of the Commonwealth to feel that wrong has been done him. This point is so clear, and so manifestly fair and just, that further comment is unnecessary. Let all the children attend these non-sectarian schools; or else, let those who would have them go elsewhere put their hands into their pockets and pay the bills out of their own private funds. Let your word be, "Millions for the public schools, but not a penny for the teaching of any hide-bound shibboleth!"

But take the other proposition, that Education should be *Secular*. It is not always that the dictionary definition of a term is the best; but in the case before us the definition could not be better. Webster defines *Secular* as "*pertaining to this present world;*" and it is in that sense alone that I would use the word to-night. When I say, then, that education should be secular, what I would be understood as meaning is this, that the sole end and aim of education should be to fit and train men and women for the proper living of the life that now is.

It is not necessary for me to say to you that the professed aim of the Church is the very opposite of that. Its business, and its sole business, is, not to make men and women for this world, but to make saints and angels for the world to come. Its business is not to save *human lives* from ignorance and squalor and crime in this world, but to save "souls" from a "Hell" in some future state. One of the chief fears with the Archbishop, as expressed in his printed utterance, was that the Protestants might steal from him the "souls of the children." Just what the "soul" is, apart from the physical, mental and moral faculties, we have never been told; but whatever it may be, it is the "soul" that the Church is trying to get at and to "save from some sort of fearful destiny awaiting it in the future."

Yes, the Church is in the *angel* business. But I would say, in passing, that it isn't doing a very *flourishing* business at present. Let me give you a few facts, drawn from official

figures. Take the city of Rome, the head and centre of the Church, the very heart of the great Episcopal Corporation, where, if any where, one might expect to find the cleanest record—take Rome, I say, and compare it with other European capitals as regards crime. For every 100 legitimate births, there are illegitimate, in London, 4; in Brussels, 9; in Paris 48; in Rome, 143. In the year 1870 there were born in Rome 4,378 children, and 3,163 of these were born out of wedlock! The statistics corresponding to the latter years of the Pontifical rule show that there was committed one murder in England for every 187,000 inhabitants; in Holland, one for every 168,000; In Russia, one for every 100,000; in Austria, one for every 4,113; in Naples one for every 2,750; and in the Estate of the Pope, one for every 750! Strange, that the moral atmosphere should be found growing fouler and fouler the nearer we approach the dwelling place of the Vicar of God! But such is the fact, and it cannot be rubbed out. Holy Church has within her pale thousands of as grand men and women as are to be found on earth; but at the same time She gives to the world far more than her natural share of criminals which ought not to be, if there is the virtue in her Sacraments which She claims there is. All over the world you will find more wrong-doing in the Church, according to population, than you will find outside of it. Take the official figures for our own city of Halifax, for the municipal year '91-92, and they run as follows:

Crimes committed by—

Universalists	8
Salvationists.....	4
Lutherans	28
Methodists.....	61
Presbyterians	68
Baptists.....	82
Church of England	284
Roman Catholic.....	743

Take the combined crimes of all the Sects, amounting to 535, and add to them the crimes of the 100 Sinners who professed no religion, giving a total of 635, and Holy Church still leads

them all by 108 black marks! Holy Church with a third of the population of the city furnishes considerably more than half of the Sinners in the city!

But to return from this digression. I was saying that the avowed aim of the Church is to make saints and angels, for the world to come; while it should be the only aim of education to make good men and women for the world that now is. We want to teach the children how to be well and strong. We want to teach them how to be self-supporting and independent. We want to instruct them in the truths of history, science, art. We want to teach them, further, a still grander science, a still nobler art, the science of manhood and womanhood, the art of getting through the world without degrading their truth and honor. And when we have done that much, when we have taught the children how to be healthy, and how to be industrious and self-supporting, how to think, and how to act so as to be manly and womanly, we have completed our task and performed to them full the duty we owed them. Such education it is that helps one to be a happy, prosperous, self-respecting, law-abiding citizen of the State he happens to live in, and that is enough. This world is the only one we *know* anything about, and the education we need is the education that will help us to make the most of this world, that will help us to lead the best lives day by day as we go along towards the evening. There may be, beyond this life's sunset, a glorious morning, or there may not be—just which is true, nobody living can tell; no, not even the Archbishop. Nor does it matter *which* is true; so far as this present life goes. What we want to do, now, is to live this life, as grandly and as beautifully as we can, whether there is, or is not, anything beyond. There is nothing practical or truly helpful in the Church education proper. How can a child be helped to fight the battle of life, how can it be made stronger in truth and virtue, by merely giving it a little music, and a little painting, and a little garbled history, with big doses of nonsense about a lot of old saints, who died a thousand years ago, and whose chief virtue was that they never lied half as much themselves as the church has lied for them since their death. Indeed, if the priests of the church had their way, they would, through their miserable parochial

schools literally ruin the human mind. They take the young child, when it is wax to receive and marble to retain, inoculate it with certain ideas, and presently the child is a slave, with no more *mind*, in the true sense of the word, than a post. The dawning reason in the little one's soul is stamped out so soon as it makes the first appearance, and the pupil is taught not to think, but simply to listen and repeat. The Chinese woman's foot is *not* a foot—it is a caricature of a foot; and the mind that is turned out by the purely Parochial School is not a mind, but simply a caricature of a mind. The child, under right conditions, might become a thinker and reasoner; but under priestly control it remains to its dying day, a parrot. Not only so, but the young mind, under parochial tutelage, is *poisoned* and *corrupted*. Let me explain myself. In the first place, then, the Church is the sworn enemy of free investigation. She will permit no questions to be put to her. Her word to her children is, "Listen, and be silent." And while they are listening, her teachers fill them full of the truth that is half a lie. She gives them garbled History, garbled Science, garbled Morality. They must know things, not as they are, but as they have been colored and distorted by the priests. The Vicars of God have never yet hesitated to lie whenever it was necessary for them to do so. Everybody who knows anything at all of the initial conflict between the Church and the Reformers is acquainted with that accursed word CASUISTRY. And what was Casuistry? It was, in plain language, a deliberately planned and highly elaborated science of lying. As Sir Henry Maine put it, "they went on with their dexterous refinements till they ended in so attenuating the moral features of actions, and so belying the moral instincts of our being, that at length the conscience of mankind rose suddenly in revolt against them, and consigned to one common ruin the system and its doctors." The blow was struck by Blaise Pascal, in the celebrated "Provincial Letters." Good Catholic as he was, Pascal could not endure such depravity, and like a mighty David, he slung at it the stone that killed it. But no, I am wrong, he did not kill it; it came to life again; and ITS SPIRIT EXISTS TO-DAY IN EVERY PAROCHIAL SCHOOL IN THE LAND; which spirit, unless its influence is in some way counteracted, will poison the children's minds

beyond all hope of redemption. TRUTH, in order to be truth, must be son-sectarian. The minute a man sets out to preach or teach a Sectarian truth, that minute he begins to pucker his mouth for a lie. When the priests of Massachusetts, a few years ago, raised a storm against a certain public school book because it contained a full account of old Tetzal and his Indulgences, it showed, plainly enough, that the priests *did not want the book to tell the truth*. In other words, they wanted the book to tell the children a falsehood. Thus you may see what I mean by saying that the Church teachers poison and corrupt the mind. They will do it every time unless they are prevented by better influences.

No wonder, then, that about every *Catholic* country but one has declared against the Parochial Education. Even the poor old republics of South America, Ecuador alone excepted, have established the Public School System, and have, almost to a nation, imposed a heavy fine upon whoever sends a child to a Parochial School. Italy, Spain, Austria and the other Catholic lands have also, of late, repudiated the priestly education.

It was time, too; for listen to the following official statistics of illiteracy in sixteen nations, eight of them, until of late, having been under Priestly training, and eight under the free, non-sectarian Public School System. The percentage of illiteracy, then, is as follows:

Venezuela	90
Austria-Hungary	32
France	25
Brazil	84
Spain	60
Portugal	82
Belgium	42
Italy	62

Now for the other eight nations to complete the pictures:

Victoria	.035
Sweden	.30
Switzerland	.30
Netherlands	10.50
Germany	1.27
Denmark	.36
Great Britain	11.09
United States	9.40

The average percentage of illiteracy in the one group is 59.61, or over half the population ; while in the other it is but a little over 4 per cent. In other words, the illiteracy of the first group is over 14 times that of the second !

The most stunning demonstration of the hollowness of the priestly education is afforded in a bit of information from the books of the State of Massachusetts. In that State, in the year 1875, there were 100,000 people who were illiterate. *Ninety-four thousand of them were foreign born, and sixty-seven thousand of them came from Ireland !* Poor old priest-ridden Ireland ! What a record that is to be set down against her ! Ireland wants Home Rule, but if she had sense enough to throw those priests overboard she might get along well enough without Home Rule. Poor old Ireland ! How much wiser and happier she would be, had Saint Patrick only driven out the Jesuits along with the snakes !

Well, this great fight must go on till the right wins. Medievalism must not rule these closing years of the Nineteenth Century. We must not be dictated to by any Italian Jesuit, or by any agent of his. We want fair play, and plenty of it. We want freedom, the good old freedom that leaves a man subject only to the laws of the State and the deliverances of his own conscience and reason. Go on, then, gentlemen of the School Board ! Build your school house ! And when you have builded it, elect your own teachers ; elect them to teach neither Catholicism nor Protestantism, but the plain non-sectarian truth ! And when you have done that, and opened your school house doors for the children to come in, if somebody refuses to let them enter, then let that person, out of his own money, provide such place as he would like.

Yes, the fight must go on—not, however, between friends and neighbors, Catholic and Protestant, who at heart love each other and should continue to love each other—but between all friends of liberty and truth, Catholic *and* Protestant, and the agents of the proud and haughty Corporation which would beat and bully us into abject submission to its would be almighty will ! Long ago, in speaking of the good old birthright that Englishmen held dear the great Lord Chatham, from his place in Parliment said : “Every man’s house is

called his castle. Why? Because it is surrounded by a moat, or defended by a wall? No! It may be a straw-built hut; the wind may whistle through it; the rain may enter it; but the King cannot." In all English-speaking lands a man's house is *his own*, his against all Congresses and Parliaments, all Presidents and Kings. And shall I think less of my *mind* than of my *house*? While I say, even to the King himself, "Step not thy foot across my threshold," shall I surrender my mind to every petty priest and permit him to do with it as he pleases? Far be the miserable thought from me! Command the priest to step down from his tripod, deliver up his trident, and be, not your master or god, but your brother and your friend.

Don't be afraid of the priest. He can't hurt you, unless you yourself allow him to. The most that he can do is to hurl at you the sentence of Excommunication. But that won't hurt you. I never played a game of poker in my life; but I believe there is a poker term known as "bluffing." And what is bluffing? Well, it is something like this: You are playing for big stakes, and yet you hold a mighty poor hand and you are gone, unless you can scare the other fellows off. So, notwithstanding your miserable cards, you brace up and bet big, as though you had a crack hand; the rest of them are afraid to come to time, and the stakes are yours. Such is bluffing. Now, when you anger the priest, and he hurls his excommunication at you, he is simply bluffing—he is trying to make you believe that he holds four aces, when in reality he hasn't as much as a pair of deuces. Hold your ground for a season and he will cave in. Hold your ground, then. Stand up for the State against the Church, for Reason against Priestcraft, and for liberty against all the world!

